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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to determine whether the divergent career directions of a sample of woman educators might have been predicted from personality-related data taken from autobiographical essays written when these educators applied for teacher training 20 years ago. Data were analyzed for 77 educators who entered the same graduate teacher-training institution and who began their careers as classroom teachers. Forty of these women are currently teaching children and 37 work with adults in a wide range of leadership roles within the field of childhood education. Follow-up data were collected from 46 members of the original sample (20 teachers and 26 leaders) to determine whether the groups differ in their current views of themselves and their careers. Aspects of the autobiographical data examined were: (1) characterizations of the childhood self as self-directing versus reliant on others and (2) characterizations of the self-as-young adult as confident, career-oriented versus unsure, self-oriented. Other variables examined included the number and type of major life crises, birth order, attitudes toward parents, identification with role models, academic standing in school, reasons for becoming a teacher, and preferred mode of communication. The results were interpreted as showing that the differences between the teachers and the leaders were consistent with the personality-related differences revealed in their autobiographies of 20 years ago. Results are discussed in detail and conclusions and implications are presented. (JMB)

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EARLY PREDICTORS OF LEADERSHIP IN WOMEN EDUCATORS: PERSONALITY AND CAREER OVER TWO DECADES

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EARLY PREDICTORS OF LEADERSHIP IN WOMEN EDUCATORS: PERSONALITY AND CAREER OVER TWO DECADES

The present study examines relationships between personality and career direction in two groups of women educators who are now in their forties.[1] Both groups entered the same graduate teacher-training institution some 20 years ago and both began their professional lives as classroom teachers of children. What differentiates them is that one group has continued to teach children while the other left the classroom to take on educational leadership roles in which primary work relationships are with other adults (as in administration, supervision, teacher-training). We wanted to find out whether these divergent career directions might have been predicted from personality-related data, that is, autobiographies, written by these educators when they applied for teacher-training as young adults. We also wanted to know whether the groups differ in the ways they view themselves and their careers now that they are in their middle years.

Why did we anticipate personality differences between the two career groups. First, we viewed the demands involved in classroom work with children and those entailed in leadership work with adults as so different from one another that the roles must, theoretically, attract people with differing cognitive, emotional, and social needs.[2] Second, our observations of educators working in various roles and settings reveal that the successful teacher of children may be totally ineffective in work with adults, and the competent educational administrator may be equally unable to maintain good relations with children. Third, an unanticipated finding in an earlier study of a group of student teachers was that their long-range career preferences within the field of childhood education were strikingly related to aspects of their personalities that were reflected in autobiographical descriptions of their childhood selves.[3] Specifically, we

found that the student teachers who hoped eventually to become educational administrators, supervisors, or college teachers almost invariably described their childhood selves in terms reflecting a coping, self-initiating, independent orientation, while those who hoped to continue teaching children recalled childhood as a time when life had happened to them--for better or worse--rather than one that they had lived actively and by their own initiative.

These were some of the reasons for postulating that the long-range career directions taken by women who go into graduate training to become teachers are personality-related, and for hypothesizing that these directions could be predicted from autobiographies.

This report consists of the following parts:

First, a description of the basic study, which examines the autobiographies and other material submitted by the two groups of educators when they applied for teacher-training some 20 years ago;

Second, an outline of trends found in the responses of 60 percent of the sample to a recent follow-up questionnaire;

Third, an examination of some relationships between the autobiographical data and the follow-up data;

And, finally, a discussion of implications of further research in these directions for (1) developing more effective teacher-training and leadership programs, (2) conceptualizing the dynamic forces that are at work in varied segments of the educational system, and (3) generating knowledge of career choice and development in women.

1. The Basic Study

The hypothesis of the basic study was that the long-range career directions taken by women who enter training to become teachers are

personality-related, and that these directions can be predicted from autobiographies written by groups of such women at the point of their entry into training for their careers. In order to provide a preliminary test of this hypothesis, we selected for the study a group of women educators who were now old enough to have settled into relatively stable career patterns, and who as young adults had attended a graduate teacher-training institution that requires of its applicants an autobiographical account of their lives.

Sample

The sample consists of 77 such educators. Of these, 40 are currently teaching children and have been doing so for more than 10 years; the other 37 taught children for less than 10 years and are now working with adults in a wide range of leadership roles within the childhood education field (e.g., administration, supervision, teacher-training, consulting, college teaching).[4]

The members of the sample are, by and large, homogeneous in several respects: they are now in their forties, come from middle-class backgrounds, grew up during World War II, graduated from liberal arts colleges, entered a graduate program in teacher-training when they were in their twenties, married and had children.

Sources of Data

As we have indicated, the primary source of data was autobiographical essays which the subjects had written in applying for their teacher-training, as part of the routine application procedure. They wrote the essays in response to the following instructions:

> It is recognized that teaching is not only a matter of technical competence but also a process of building

> relationships with children. Thus, information concerning personal life experiences, including childhood, is considered relevant both to the selection and preparation of the teacher.
>
> Review briefly the events of childhood and adolescence, at home, in school. How did you feel about your early experiences and relationships as you were living through them? As you look back now, which experiences and relationships seem to have had a meaningful effect on your development as a person going into the teaching profession? Describe also the recent experiences which have been most important for you--study, reading, friendships, unusual adventures or opportunities, disappointments, new skills or attitudes, new insights into yourself and others. What led to your decision to become a teacher?
>
> Write freely as though you were talking to someone. The contents of this personal essay will be kept confidential.

Another source of data was the subjects' responses to two questions which appeared on the admissions application itself. The first of these concerned the subjects' reasons for wanting to become a teacher; and the second, whether they preferred to communicate their ideas through writing or talking, and the reasons why.

Analysis of the Data

The Autobiographies

The analysis of the autobiographical data centered on two major dimensions: (a) characterizations of the childhood self, and (b) characterizations of the self-as-young adult about to enter training for a career.

The Childhood Self. The sections of each autobiography which pertained to the subjects' childhood self were examined for assignment to one of two basic categories--predominantly active (self-directing) versus predominantly passive (reliant on others). These categories were intended to reflect gross differences in the subjects' (recalled) childhood self-concepts and modes of adaptation.

The predominantly active category was applied to those cases in which the subjects pictured their childhood selves as being initiators, playing a part in the determination of their fate, being assertive, on top of things. Whether they recalled being happy or unhappy was not relevant; they might have experienced considerable pain and difficulty, but they recalled actively coping, mastering, conquering adversity or embracing challenge.[5]

The predominantly passive category was used to cover cases in which, recalling their childhoods, the subjects viewed themselves to be on the timid, unassertive side, or as feeling powerless. Included was a focus on unpleasant feelings such as shyness, anxiety, and insecurity, being excluded by peers. Again, overall feelings of happiness or sadness were not in themselves pertinent. The subjects might have recalled idyllic childhoods in which parents or others consistently provided enjoyable experiences. The crucial criterion was that they presented themselves as having passively experienced events.

An additional category--active/passive--was introduced to encompass certain cases in which neither an active nor passive orientation could be judged as predominant, either because the subject described situational differences in orientation (e.g., active at school, passive at home) or a shift from one orientation to the other during subsequent stages of childhood.

The Young Adult Self. Two categories were applied to the autobiographical data bearing on the subjects' concepts of themselves as young adults (i.e., at the time they were writing the autobiographies): (1) predominantly confident, career-oriented; and (2) predominantly unsure, self-oriented.

The predominantly confident, career-oriented category was applied to those cases in which the subjects conveyed a solid sense of who they were as individuals, gave the impression that they felt prepared to embrace a career and, through that career, to make a contribution to society. Such subjects revealed a perspective on, and acceptance of, their past lives; a feeling that they had successfully mastered earlier developmental crises; had a sense of things accomplished, and were ready for a new phase. Many of these subjects specifically indicated that they had resolved their ambivalent feelings of dependence on their families and were ready to lead a life of relative independence from them.

The predominantly unsure, self-oriented category was used for those cases where the subjects gave evidence that they felt themselves still to be in the throes of growing up. Often they were wrestling with conflicts over dependence-independence, were deeply engaged in self-examination, and were attempting to understand and sort out their relations with other people. In the main, they expressed the feeling that they were making progress in developing insight into themselves and others; but at the same time conveyed a sense of uncertainty about their readiness to move into a career.[6]

In the assignment of the autobiographies to categories on the Childhood and Young Adult dimensions, each dimension was dealt with separately across the sample. This effort to minimize halo effect was facilitated by the fact that the data bearing on the childhood self usually appeared at the beginning of the autobiography and material dealing with the young adult self was found toward the end. Following the categorization of all

the autobiographies by one investigator, a second investigator made independent judgments on approximately one-third of the autobiographies selected at random.[7] On the childhood self dimension, with assignment of each autobiography to one of the three categories, there was 77 percent agreement between the judges; on the second dimension with only two categories, interjudge agreement was 81 percent.

Supplementary Analyses. The autobiographies were also examined to discover whether group differences obtained on other dimensions which might theoretically separate leaders from teachers. Of primary importance in this regard was major life crises. Here, each autobiography was examined to see whether the subject reported a significant trauma or loss in the course of growing up--an event which, had it occurred more frequently in the teacher or the leader group, might theoretically affect interpretation of any personality-related differences emerging from analysis of the first two dimensions. Thus, a comparison was made of the type and number of "major life crises" described by members of the two groups. These included death of parent(s) or other significant figures in the subject's life, serious or prolonged illness or disability in family or self, parents' divorce, separation or desertion; constant moving about or a traumatic uprooting (as from Nazi Germany).

Other dimensions examined (as described later) ranged from ordinal position in the family through attitudes toward parents, and identification with different types of role models, to academic standing in school.

The Application Questions

As stated earlier, the questions on the application form that were a focus of this study asked (1) why the applicant had chosen to become a teacher, and (2) whether she preferred to communicate her ideas through

writing or talking, and why. Analysis of these data involved constructing categories to cover as many as possible of the individual responses given and then comparing group frequencies within and among categories. The procedures that were established for assessing agreement between judges on the two major dimensions described above were applied here as well.

Findings

The Autobiographies

The analysis of the autobiographies on the two major dimensions revealed differences between the classroom teacher group and the leader group as follows:

The Childhood Self. "Predominantly active" descriptions of the childhood self were found more often in the leader group, and "predominantly passive" descriptions were found more often in the teacher group (see Table 1). The frequency of the combined active/passive cases was approximately the same for the two groups.

Insert Table 1 about here

In order to convey the nature of the qualitative differences reflected in the above categories, we have excerpted the following as exemplary of predominantly active and predominantly passive cases.

First, from the predominantly active group:

> I must have been a hard child to live with--my drive for self-expression, for independence was high....I could cope; even as a child, I was not thrown by circumstance.
>
> I had an unusual amount of freedom and independence as a child and young girl....My parents had never been possessive or demanding, and while we were growing up they did not try to keep us from finding our own ways. I grew to love this freedom and independence very early in my life.

Table 1

Prospective Women Teachers' Autobiographical Characterizations of Themselves as Children in Relation to Their Educational Roles Twenty Years Later (N=61)*

Childhood Self	Educational Leader (N=29)	Classroom Teacher (N=32)
Predominantly Active	16	5
Predominantly Passive	8	21
Active/Passive	5	6

*The N is smaller than the total study sample because eight teachers and eight leaders did not furnish sufficient relevant information for categorization.

$\chi^2 = 11.60$, df 2, $p < .01$

I was a mixture that brought both happiness and disappointment to my parents. On the one hand I was a happy and active child, adjusting quickly to new situations, to new children and adults, and learning rapidly without strenuous effort. On the other hand, I wasn't particularly studious, I did not stick to any project for very long. I was a far cry from the shy, sensitive and highly intellectual child that I sometimes felt my parents wished me to be.

Although I was always rather defiant and aggressive, I had also the ability to form affectionate relationships, and I had many playmates and vigorous interests.

My mother and I were both dominant personalities and it was a question of who would yield to the other.

And, from the predominantly passive group:

I felt very inadequate socially and was extremely concerned with being accepted. I was very shy and quiet--afraid to express myself positively on any subject, to disagree with people and give an opinion of my own.

I was extremely [illegible] unable to meet new people without a great deal of anguish and unresponsive in a group.

I was hampered by lack of self-confidence and any show of self-assertion and I rarely contributed to any discussion at school.

I remember myself as a shy child, always wanting to know where I stood with people.

For many years antagonisms were a personal threat to me and I would rarely allow myself to express them. When faced with antagonism expressed between other people, I would often try to escape.

I was very fortunate in having the home environment that I did. I was an only child and therefore received by parents' full attention. This might imply that I received too much attention and coddling, but this is not quite true. I was shielded from much unpleasantness, but, more important, my parents had time to spend with me.

Growing up, I had a very strong impression of security and a happy family life. I was a quiet, "mature," undemanding child. My parents encouraged playmate relationships, took us on many outings, provided play materials.

In brief, the leaders and the teachers tended to characterize their childhood selves differently; and these differences paralleled those found

between their counterparts in the study that prompted the present research (Rosen, 1968).

The Young Adult Self. On this second dimension, as shown in Table 2, most of the autobiographies of the leaders were categorized as "predominantly confident, career-oriented" and those of the teachers as "predominantly unsure, self-oriented."

Insert Table 2 about here

On this dimension, the cues on which the categorizations were based tended to be more subtle, more variable, and more cumulative in impact than was the case with the Childhood Self, in which fairly straightforward characterizations were the general rule. For this reason it is not possible, as before, to present condensed "typical" examples of the differences that characterized the groups in projecting their concepts of themselves as young adults. In total effect, however, the leaders appeared to have come to terms with their childhoods and now felt sufficiently free of early conflicts to turn their energies away from the self and toward a career; and the teachers projected a picture of still wrestling with issues from their childhoods, struggling to loosen their dependent ties on their parents, and experiencing apprehension about their readiness to commit themselves to a profession.

Subsidiary analyses. Comparisons of the two groups with respect to major life crises reported in the autobiographies showed striking similarity in both kind and number. Slightly less than half of each group reported a major life crisis. Approximately 20 percent of each group had suffered the death of a close family member; and 17 percent of the teachers and 25 percent of the leaders had experienced parental divorce, separation,

Table 2

Prospective Women Teachers' Autobiographical Characterizations of Themselves on Entering Teacher Training in Relation to Their Educational Roles Twenty Years Later (N=66)*

Self as Young Adult	Educational Leader (N=31)	Classroom Teacher (N=35)
Confident, Career-Oriented	24	8
Unsure, Self-Oriented	7	27

*The N is smaller than the study sample because six leaders and five teachers did not furnish sufficient relevant information for categorization.

$\chi^2 = 19.59$, df 1, $p < .001$

or desertion.

There were, however, notable differences in the recalled response to such crises and to their sequelae by the teachers and the leaders, as well as in their interpretations of the long-range impact of these events on their lives. Such differences are highlighted in the autobiographies of a member of each group who had been a refugee from Hitler's Germany. In the excerpts that follow, a teacher and leader respectively refer to the impact of the moving about that followed their escape with their families.

> This caused me some loneliness and gave rise to a strong need to belong somewhere....A sensitivity about being foreign and different remained with me for a long time. Even today I am trying to overcome a sensitivity to criticism and a fear of doing the wrong thing, which may stem partly from this period. My still existing need to belong I also trace partly to this.

> This instability and lack of belonging to any particular place have had a profound influence on my development. The constant changes forced me to learn to adjust quickly to new places, new people, new customs, new schools. Today I find it very easy to adapt myself to new situations and I greatly enjoy meeting people, making friends, traveling and exploring new places.

It seems clear that these differing reactions are closely related to the broader personality differences that we have been examining; and it is noteworthy that the authors themselves draw the connections between the responses of the childhood self and the responses of the self in early adulthood.[8]

With respect to other, subsidiary dimensions of the autobiographies, in some instances we found no group differences; in others, there were inadequate data for making ratings or judgments; in still others, we could not find a basis for documenting impressions.

For example, we examined the subjects' ordinal position in their families and found no differences between the leader and teacher groups. (In

the total sample there were more oldest or only children than might be expected but their representation was approximately equal in the two groups.) We also looked for significant role models during childhood to see, for instance, if the leaders had had mothers or other significant adult females in their lives who were notably independent or assertive, with whom they might have identified. But there were insufficient data to make any judgment here. Further, we examined overall attitudes toward parents and toward mothers and fathers individually and could find no differences in the ways such attitudes were described. (Most were generally positive, but it must be said that there was so much variability in quantity and quality of information here that we are reluctant to conclude that, given more comparable data from subject to subject, group differences would not in fact be revealed.) Further, no reliable differences could be found in attitudes toward siblings (again, largely positive) nor in reported academic performance (most said they did well in school) nor in gross attitudes toward school (most liked it). We tried to make comparisons of the adolescent period, but found it impossible to develop sensible standards. (For one person childhood had been a horrendous time and adolescence was "much improved"; for another, childhood was idyllic but adolescence was a "jolt"; for others it was difficult to tell what stage after childhood was being described.)

There were other areas in which we were unable to make comparisons, due essentially to the "unguided" nature of the autobiographies, but they seem to us potentially fruitful areas for further research. For example, we searched the autobiographies to see if one group of subjects had been exposed more than the other to different kinds of people, cultures, ideas, values--the type of exposure which might theoretically stimulate psycholog-

ical growth and enjoyment of challenge and difference, the development of a questioning mind, impatience with the predictable and the status quo.

Finally, we had strong global impressions about group differences both in language and general approach to the autobiographies. The teachers seemed to have a much greater psychological proximity to the events of their childhoods. Whether describing a pleasant memory (the feel of grass beneath bare feet, the smell of flowers on a summer day) or a "devastating" one (being humiliated by a teacher in front of the class), the teachers wrote in the kind of vivid detail that conveyed the impression that their experiences had occurred only yesterday. Often the author's desire for reexperiencing the event seemed to be the important thing in recounting it --not its "meaning" or its impact on the subsequent events of her life.

The leaders' reports were far less sensuous and immediate, reflecting instead an analytic, interpretive turn of mind, a tendency to cast things into perspective and see their consequences within the larger context of their lives. It is as if the teachers had responded primarily to one question in the guidelines for writing the autobiography, i.e., "How did you feel about your early experiences and relationships as you were living through them?" and the leaders, to another, i.e., "As you look back now, which experiences and relationships seem to have had a meaningful effect on your development as a person going into the teaching profession?"

In sum, while the analyses of the autobiographies yielded reliable differences only on the major dimensions--the variables dealing with self-concept and modes of adaptation to life events--given more systematic data, other differences associated with the career direction of teachers and leaders might well be identified.

The Application Questions

As stated earlier, we examined the subjects' responses to two questions that appeared on their applications for the teacher-training program. The first question concerned the applicant's reason for wanting to become a teacher and the second, whether she preferred to express ideas in writing or by talking, and then to give the reason for this preference.

Reasons for becoming a teacher. While the issue of motivation to teach would seem germane to a study dealing with career direction in women educators, we found that by and large their responses were bland and stereotyped (e.g., enjoyment of children; interest in teaching them) rather than based on thoughtful self-appraisal. Within this framework, we were able to detect some group trends which, although they applied only to a minority of each group, were notable nevertheless. For example, more leaders than teachers gave reasons bearing on an interest in cognitive-developmental issues (i.e., a concern with intellectual and personality development in children or in the self). This was true of 46 percent of the leaders, but of only 8 percent of the teachers (17 of 37 vs. 3 of 39). As another example, more teachers than leaders mentioned affective-relational aspects of teaching (i.e., having a strong feeling for children and a wish or need to be with them); this applied to 28 percent of the teachers compared with 5 percent of the leaders (11 of 39 vs. 2 of 37).

Preferred mode of communication. In response to the question as to whether writing or talking was the preferred (easier) mode of communicating ideas, more teachers than leaders unequivocally preferred talking, while more leaders than teachers said they found both equally easy (and that their preference depended on circumstances).[9] But these differences in preferred mode per se were not substantial.

As will be seen, however, group differences did emerge when the reasons for the preferred mode--rather than the choice itself--were examined. The reasons given by the respondents were looked at in terms of their feelings of competence versus feelings of unsureness regarding their ability to develop, formulate, or communicate ideas.

The competence category was applied to statements reflecting enjoyment in the development of ideas or in exchanging them with others. While responses placed in this category might indicate an appreciation of the contributions of other people in the development of thought, the basic criterion was a sense of confidence on the part of the respondent in her own thinking processes and in her ability to communicate clearly and directly with other people.

The unsureness category was applied to answers reflecting a respondent's uncertainty about the clarity of her thought, being understood (misunderstood), or getting ideas across without seeming confused. Many respondents who were placed in this category expressed a need for reassurance provided by the physical presence of the person with whom they were attempting to communicate. Some indicated directly that they felt dependent on the other person for stimulation, for getting their thoughts in order, for confirmation that they were not being misinterpreted.

Of 23 leaders and 28 teachers who responded to this question,[10] the responses of the leaders predominated in the competence category and those of the teachers in the unsureness category: 14 (61 percent) of the leaders, but only 6 (23 percent) of the teachers were found to express "ideational/communicative competence," while only 9 (39 percent) of the leaders but 22 (79 percent) of the teachers were categorized as being "unsure."

Thus, in their explanations of their preferred mode of communication--a seemingly neutral issue--the teachers and the leaders again revealed personality-related differences, and these are consistent with the differences they revealed in their autobiographical accounts of their lives. In both sets of data, the leaders projected a sense of confidence and independence; and the teachers, a strong reliance on others for guidance, for stimulation, and for reassurance of their own personal worth.

But what do such personality-related differences, consistent as they appeared to be, have to do with the career paths that were subsequently taken by members of the two groups?

Looking back at the study that prompted this research (and in which the autobiographical findings were parallel), we found trends in one-year follow-up interviews that seem potentially pertinent here.[11] In that study, the student teachers who hoped to move out of the classroom (and who had described their childhood selves positively in their autobiographies) revealed in the interviews a sense of growing competence and psychological movement forward. They anticipated change and welcomed future challenges. Their stated long-range career goals to move into roles outside the classroom were, it appeared, specific manifestations of this general orientation.

The student teachers who hoped to remain in the classroom (and who had described their childhood selves negatively) revealed, by contrast, a resistance to change and a strong desire for the security of the status quo. The expressed goal of this group to remain in the classroom appeared also to reflect their more basic personality orientation.

In other words, the long-range career aspirations expressed by the two groups in the earlier study were viewed as indicators of personality differences between them, and as revealing expectations of themselves in the

future that were theoretically consonant with their perceptions of themselves at the time of writing their autobiographies and of their childhood selves recalled. As Erikson has postulated (in a formulation of optimum development), the experience of self-esteem is confirmed at the end of each developmental crisis and grows to be a conviction that one is learning effective steps toward a tangible future.[12] In this earlier study, the group that hoped to move out of the classroom appeared to have this conviction. The group that hoped to remain in the classroom, however, conveyed far less sense of self-esteem, and revealed, at least in its professional aspirations and attitudes, no expectation of a future different from the present.

It is true that in the earlier study group assignment was based on career aspirations, and in the present research on actual career paths taken over two decades or more. Yet it seemed to us that the above interpretation regarding personality-related differences and career aspirations might nonetheless be applicable here. The professional patterns of the leaders can be viewed as real-life manifestations of the sense of self-esteem and movement forward in life which they had projected years before in their autobiographies. By the same token, continuation in the role of classroom teacher by the other group can be viewed as a vocational choice reflecting the persistence of earlier psychological patterns of passivity and self-doubt, a preference for the security of what is known and safe--for the stability of classroom teaching in which, although the population of children changes, the same basic processes are repeated year after year.

While such an explanation appeared reasonable, we wanted to find out whether it could be supported and, if so, extended or refined. To this end, we sought to follow up as many members of the original group as we could locate.

2. The Follow-Up Study

We were able to obtain follow-up information on 46 of the original 77 members of the sample. Of these, 20 were classroom teachers and 26 were in leadership roles. The information was gathered through a questionnaire which covered a wide range of factual data concerning the educators' professional histories as well as their attitudes toward their work and themselves, including their perceptions of the impact of social change on their lives.

For present purposes, we focused on three issues:[13] (1) the reasons given by the teachers for remaining in the classroom and by the leaders for leaving and for moving into other roles; (2) the future career hopes or plans of both groups; and (3) the perceptions of each group of the relevance of the issues raised by the women's movement for their own personal/professional development over the years. In addition, we examined personality trends that appeared to come through the questionnaire taken as a whole.

The analysis of responses to the issues just described revealed the following:

(1) Almost half the leaders said they had left the classroom seeking a greater challenge or an opportunity to make a wider impact in their field; others saw leaving and taking on administrative or supervisory roles as a natural progression in their careers; still others wrote of unplanned circumstances. None said she had resisted leaving the classroom even though most said they had enjoyed teaching; only one person said she had left because there were aspects of the situation with which she couldn't cope. As for the future, only one of the leaders expressed interest in returning to classroom teaching.

Few teachers said they had ever considered leaving the classroom. Of those who had thought about it, most said they simply did not want to lose contact with children and had resisted the idea. Others said they had doubts about their abilities to do anything else, or lacked the confidence to work with adults. While some of the teachers indicated that they felt they should want to leave the classroom and do something else, they were really happy doing what they were doing.

(2) When asked what they hoped to be doing five to ten years from now, almost 70 percent of the leaders mentioned one or more goals, and conveyed the expectation of achieving them. By comparison, only 25 percent of the teachers actually stated a goal and conveyed the expectation of achieving it. Most of the teachers said either that they had not thought about the future or indicated that they viewed it as uncertain or threatening.

(3) Regarding the women's movement, 80 percent of the leaders said they viewed one or more of the issues as relevant to their own personal/professional development; and they tended to focus on issues of male domination in the field of education or in society at large, and on their feelings of greater freedom to express assertive, aggressive or competitive feelings which previously they had tried to hold in check. Some of the leaders described dramatic changes in attitudes and lifestyle.

As one leader put it:

> It's been the most intellectually liberating and one of the most difficult periods of growth for me. Reworked my whole thing especially after reading the article in MS on the Fear of Success which gave insight into my anti-intellectual and earth mother bit. Became aware of strong need to be a Separate Person who will be able to exist well 20 years from now doing my thing without searching for someone or something to serve.

Most of the teachers simply said that the movement was not relevant to them and expressed contentment with their lives. None of the teachers dis-

played strongly positive reactions to the movement. Among the 30 percent who said it had some relevance to their lives, most were tentative and none described related changes in the self or in style of living. Some said directly that they enjoyed the traditional aspects of their roles as wife and mother and did not want to change. A few went on to reject "women's lib" outright, as did the teacher who responded: 'I feel no kinship at all with the current movement--I very much wanted a career and have it. Why are they so angry?

Additional group differences were suggested by the following: In responding to items asking about their professional strengths and weaknesses, the leaders tended to view their strengths as lying in the intellectual, organizational, and administrative spheres of their work, while the teachers emphasized their affective, nurturing, or therapeutic skills with children. In evaluating their professional weaknesses, the leaders tended to stress their overly-aggressive, assertive, "pushy" tendencies and their difficulties in controlling these (e.g., "I have the desire to tell people all the answers so I must hold myself in constant check. But even then I often slip"). By contrast, many teachers viewed themselves as too passive, unassertive, and lacking in self-confidence. Some focused directly on specific needs for more initiative, perseverance, and independence of mind (e.g., "I often need an outside nudge to keep from settling in a rut"; "I don't follow through enough--too, I can be influenced by outside opinions or worse, what I <u>think</u> outsiders are thinking").

In sum, analysis of the follow-up questionnaire, which focuses on current self-assessment, suggests that the leaders tend to feel assertive, autonomous, self-confident, and invested in challenge and change; and the teachers, more passive, dependent, and content with the comfort and

security of a familiar environment.

3. Relationships Between the Autobiographies and Follow-Up Questionnaires

Personality Consistency and Career Direction Over Time

The differences between the teachers and the leaders are consistent with the personality-related differences that were revealed in their autobiographies of 20 years ago. In these documents, as we have seen, those who were to remain in the classroom throughout their careers recalled childhood experiences reflecting an essentially passive and dependent orientation toward people and events, and for many, anxieties around issues of security and belonging. These issues continued to be central in young adulthood as they struggled to resolve their dependent ties on parental figures and wrestled with problems of identity and uncertainties about a career. In contrast, their counterparts, who were later to leave the classroom, conveyed in their descriptions of their childhoods a sense of active mastery and self-esteem; and in their assessments of themselves as young adults, a quality of having come to terms with stages past and a psychological readiness to move into a career.

Given the persistence of these group personality differences through time, it makes sense that the former group, once established in the classroom and having found satisfaction there, should have elected to remain; and that the latter group, having taught children for a time, should choose to leave the classroom to seek new challenges in their careers.

At the conclusion of the first section of this report (based on the earlier study of student teachers' career aspirations), we postulated that the career directions of the two present groups of educators were in large part manifestations of the personality differences that were revealed in

the autobiographies which they wrote on applying for training to become teachers. It seems to us that the follow-up study has served to support this postulation as well as the interpretation of the general nature of the relationships between personality and career patterns in the two groups.

Personality Variations Within Groups and Personal-Professional Motivations

We would like now to move beyond these broad relationships to a consideration of variations in personality and personal/professional motivations that may exist within the teacher and the leader groups. More specifically, in the course of studying the data from the two time periods, early adulthood and middle age, we made some preliminary observations that suggested the existence of differing patterns of associations within each group between descriptions of the childhood self and the nature of career motivations.

First, the teachers--those who have remained in the classroom teaching children throughout their careers. In examining their autobiographical descriptions of their childhoods, we found two patterns that appeared to characterize the recollections of most members of this group.

One pattern was that of shyness, often painful, and marked feelings of insecurity, especially in relation to acceptance by peers. Many in this group dwelled on their sense of isolation and loneliness, on feeling out of the swim, and on doing little to find the acceptance they wanted. While many of them recalled finding a close friend or group of friends as they moved into their teens, in the main, adolescence too was viewed as a painful stage.

The second (less frequent) pattern found among the teachers was a recall of childhood as idyllic. Just as the above group reported in vivid fashion their feelings of pain, this group described pleasurable events in

similar manner. They wrote, for example, of summer vacations in the country, recalling the way trees smelled after a rain; they wrote also about games they had played and about the fantasies they had acted out and of all the joyous, adventurous times they had shared with close-knit, loving families. But members of this group tended to meet their adolescence with a major jolt; life after childhood, they indicated, was never again the same.

How might these differing patterns of recalled childhood be linked to more specific motivations or gratifications involved in opting to remain in the classroom than those we have looked at so far?

We have evidence in the follow-up data that the first pattern may be associated with reparative motivations; that is, an effort by the teachers to make up for something missed in childhood by supplying the requisite experiences to children in the classroom, and then vicariously living out the experiences through the children.

For example, one teacher who represents this pattern wrote about her childhood:

> In my day-to-day contacts with my contemporaries in school, I felt as if I had no friends. I never felt I quite fit in...

Regarding her motivations for entering the teaching profession, expressed at the same time, she wrote:

> I want to teach for I would like to give children experiences through which they could gain confidence in themselves so that they will have courage for all things.

Now, some 20 years later, in responding to the follow-up questionnaire, this teacher writes:

> I thoroughly enjoy the ongoing life and learning with six- and seven-year-olds--the stimulation of group life and the opportunity to form relationships in depth with each child and help him gain confidence and realize himself. So much can be done by the group teacher in kindling attitudes of respect for the uniqueness of each person...and in creating responsiveness to group life.

In short, making up for a recalled childhood of feeling isolated and rejected by her peer group can be viewed as a primary motivating force both in this teacher's original career choice and in her electing to remain in the classroom. For in the role of classroom teacher, she appears to find (vicarious) gratification year after year in helping new groups of children gain confidence in themselves as individuals and as members of a group of their peers.

Among the teachers who described insecure, shy childhoods, a further motivation for remaining in the classroom can be inferred: avoidance of working with adults.

For example, one teacher states in the follow-up questionnaire that she has remained in the classroom because she continues to learn more there each year and can use her knowledge better with young children than in trying to pass it on to new teachers. At another point, however, she confesses that her weakness lies in her lack of confidence in relating to other adults. Thus, it may be that she in fact remains in the classroom with children primarily because of feelings of inadequacy as an adult in the world of adults--feelings which may stem from an early sense of rejection by peers that she has not been able to resolve or surmount.

Thus, where we found that teachers recalled unhappy, insecure childhoods, especially in relation to peers, the motivational forces that appeared most evident in their continuation of work with children were first, reparation, and second, avoidance of working with adults.

In the second autobiographical pattern in which childhood is pictured as an idyllic time (and the best period of life), one can detect another type of motivation in the teacher's choosing to continue working with children. This lies in her effort to recreate in the classroom her own ideal-

ized childhood; in her desire to participate in the kinds of social-emotional-cognitive interactions that characterized her life prior to adolescence. Theoretically, through her identification both with positively remembered adult models from childhood and with the children in her classroom she is able to recapture the essence of her childhood and relive it year after year with a renewed sense of joy and satisfaction. At the same time, this teacher may share with her colleagues, described above, a lack of confidence in working with adults because, like her colleagues, she has never loosened her ties with childhood sufficiently to feel fully grown up in an adult world.

An exemplar of this second pattern was a teacher who said, in her recent questionnaire, that she never wanted to leave the classroom and didn't think she would ever want to be in the position of telling other people how to work with children.

In response to a questionnaire item asking what she liked about the young children she had elected to teach, she wrote:

> Partly I just seem to have a "gut" response to those ages which is almost impossible to analyze: If I say "naturalness" some have been "putter-oners"; if I say "openness" some have been shy and timid; if I say "honesty" some of them lie, if they can. Maybe partly the conviction that one can, with these ages and with most of them, get to their inner selves and help them grow and change in positive directions.

This teacher said in her autobiography that her adolescence was fraught with shyness and feelings of inferiority. But of her childhood she wrote:

> I have a very vivid and lasting memory of walking down a road by myself, looking for some of the kids. It was after school on a lovely spring afternoon and I had changed into my comfortable old, and rather dirty, clothes (as the family rule was, for after school play). The sun was warm on my back and I remember being acutely aware of the trees and the

> countryside around me, and having a "shining" feeling that seemed to flow all through me, of complete and perfect well-being. If there is any one moment that could summarize my childhood, that would be it.

Thus, it is possible to see how the persistence of highly-charged feelings about childhood--whether positive or negative--may influence a teacher's continuing to work with children. Where the feelings are strongly positive, recapitulation of that childhood can be a dominant force; where they are negative, reparation of perceived deprivations or rejection may constitute a central motif.

As for the leaders, we again noted two basic autobiographical patterns which, in terms of their predominantly happy or unhappy childhood themes, roughly paralleled those of the teachers. But whatever the pattern, for the leaders, the issue of childhood and its memories appeared less intense.

Those who recalled childhood as a happy period of their lives tended to view that era as a life stage which had its gratifications but which was then superseded by other stages with their attendant satisfactions. One such leader recounted in her autobiography meeting each new challenge with a sense of active mastery; and she concluded by saying that she was looking forward to becoming a competent teacher. When asked in the follow-up questionnaire why she had left the classroom, she stated simply that moving on seemed to be a natural progression in her career.

With few exceptions, the leaders who recorded a difficult childhood reported events in a fairly detached manner or made short shrift of that period of their lives; and most of them tended toward an abstract, intellectualized view of their pasts. One leader who described a complicated and painful childhood ended her autobiography expressing resentment that she had been asked to delve into her early life, saying the past was past and she

had no inclination to "rehash" it. This leader said in her follow-up questionnaire that she had left the classroom seeking more intellectual challenge and colleagueship, but there was reason to believe that she had left also because continually being in the company of children reactivated (unresolved) feelings from childhood that she wanted to avoid.

In brief, then, there were at least two autobiographical patterns in the leader group that could theoretically be associated with why they left the classroom to move into leadership roles. In one, they had gotten--and given--what they wanted in the classroom and were ready to move on; in the other (at best), it is unlikely that classroom teaching had ever really met their needs.

Potential Consequences of Differing Career Motivations for Work With Children and Adults

It was found in the basic study that the recall of a happy childhood or an unhappy childhood at the point of entry into teacher-training did not differentiate between the teachers and leaders; rather it was how the teachers and the leaders recalled having dealt with the events of their childhoods--actively or passively--that was critical, and also whether they had psychological distance from that period of their lives or were still emotionally involved with their early experiences. As we have noted, however, the recall of a happy or an unhappy childhood may be associated with different types of personal-professional motivations within the teacher and leader groups and, therefore, may have differential consequences for similar work settings. Considering how the several subgroups appear to have dealt with their childhoods, we can suggest, on a theoretical basis, what the ramifications may be for their work with children or with adults.

First, with respect to the teachers, both empirical research and theory support the postulation that teachers who recall predominantly happy, secure

childhoods are likely to develop better relations with young children and facilitate psychological growth in them than are teachers whose memories of their childhoods are dominated by issues of insecurity and rejection.[14] As with any generalization, however, this finding has important exceptions. For example, some teachers in the former category may have difficulty in empathically understanding children who feel rejected and isolated in their worlds and who display extremes of behavior--withdrawal or aggression--that are symptomatic of these feelings. Such teachers have simply not themselves experienced similar emotions and behavioral manifestations in their own childhoods; nor do they have recollections of significant adult models who dealt effectively with children who did.[15]

In addition, there is an inherent risk with all teachers who remain in the classroom for many years (regardless of motivations for doing so) that they will become so immersed in the world of childhood that they experience loss of adult perspective and objectivity. It is not only being constantly in the company of children, however, but this, and the lurking feeling noted among many of the teachers in our study of not being quite grown-up themselves, of anxiety in relation to the possibility of working with other adults, and of a strong pull to repeat their own childhoods, that combine to enhance this risk.[16]

The risk may be great and the potential consequences deleterious with teachers whose early experiences are negative and whose major--and unconscious--incentive in continuing to work with children is reparation of perceived deprivation or rejection in their own childhoods. Such teachers have a strong potential for <u>overidentifying</u> with particular children through whom they can most readily live out their own unmet needs. If they lose adult perspective and act in their own interests through partisan

or competitive tactics, the consequences for the children can be frankly destructive. If, however, such teachers have the opportunity to develop appropriate self-understanding, they may be able to gain unusual competence in working with children who have special needs, such as those with specific learning handicaps or the emotionally disturbed. In fact, when such teachers are able to gain insight into the nature of the reparations they seek in their relations with children, they may move to a level of effectiveness and scope in their understanding of children that may far exceed that of their "happier, more secure" colleagues.

In contrast to their teacher counterparts, the leaders who recalled unhappy childhoods have attempted, it seems, to place distance between themselves and their early feelings and needs, primarily through the defense of intellectualization. Shutting themselves off in this manner from the ways in which they themselves thought and felt as children, they would theoretically have few, if any, resources for developing empathy with the ways in which children in the classroom think and feel.[17] It is quite possible, therefore, that during their tenure as classroom teachers they were unable to experience a sense of basic competence in their work, especially if working with very young children. As for their subsequent careers, their effectiveness and satisfaction here would appear to be a function of the extent to which their specific jobs as educational leaders required (or permitted) an intellectual, academic approach (as in research or college teaching) over one which demanded spontaneity and an emotional understanding of the feelings and needs of young children (as in supervising teachers and other adults who work directly with children).

Finally, the group whose motivational patterns appeared to be most positive--and least conflicted--were those leaders who described their

childhoods--and successive stages of development--in affirmative terms. Within the framework of careers that embraced both teaching and leadership roles, they seemed to have appropriate resources available at each stage. Theoretically, in their role as classroom teacher, they had positive experiences from their own childhoods to use in understanding and promoting the children's learning and growth; and in their later work as leaders, they had the requisite classroom experience and enough sense of their own identity as adults to impart their knowledge and support to other adults in their professional field.

If the trends that we have observed, both between and within the leader and the teacher groups are borne out in further research, they raise the provocative question as to whether the young women who enter teacher-training best prepared in terms of their personality resources to promote psychological growth in children are among those who are least likely to continue working with children.

While there is no direct evidence at the present time to substantiate these trends, findings from two other studies are clearly suggestive.

In an investigation which grew out of the early stages of the present research, Stodt[13] compared a group of classroom teachers and a group of supervisor/trainers (analogous to the leaders in the present study) on scales designed to tap dimensions such as autonomy, and items aimed at assessing attitudes toward the women's movement. Although the design of the study, the methods employed, and the characteristics of the participants differed from those of the present study (e.g., Stodt's study was based on data gathered at only one point in time; it used structured methods of assessing aspects of personality and social attitudes; and the participants came from a variety of backgrounds and training institutions),

the findings were parallel. The supervisor/trainers revealed a much greater sense of autonomy than the classroom teachers and were far more accepting of the women's movement.

It could be argued that, since there were no assessments of their personalities prior to their taking different vocational paths, the groups in Stodt's research might have differed in the ways they did as a consequence, rather than cause, of the career directions they took. However, her findings are buttressed by other research. The study of student teachers that guided the present investigation[19] provides a counterbalance to Stodt's study since the assessments of personality were made prior to the participants' entry into the teaching profession. In addition, this earlier investigation (unlike either Stodt's or the present study) evaluated the participants' on-the-job performance, focusing on their ability to develop good teacher-child relations. It was found there that the student teachers who hoped to move into administrative or college teaching roles by middle age were consistently judged as having better teacher-child relations after they became full-fledged teachers than were those who planned to remain in the classroom throughout their working lives. It was concluded that the personality differences underlying the long-range professional goals of the two groups also played a primary role in the kinds of relations they developed with children.

It appears evident that the teacher who welcomes change and progress as part of life, and who considers mastery of the difficult as intrinsic to progress, is better prepared to work flexibly with young children and promote their growth than the teacher who, threatened by the new, the difficult, and the unexpected, holds to the status quo.

While the findings from each of these (methodologically different) studies are in themselves considered to be tentative, they form a consistent picture; and jointly they underscore the importance of developing further knowledge of the influence of personality in the long-range career directions of women who enter training to become teachers of children. If it is in fact found that the teachers who are best suited psychologically to work with children are among those who leave the classroom to assume leadership roles, the consequences for teacher education, selection, and guidance, as well as for the schools themselves, could be far-reaching.

4. Conclusions and Implications

The research which has been reported here reveals that autobiographies of young women applying for teacher-training may yield predictors of their long-range career direction within the field of childhood education--that is, continuing to work with children versus a shift to leadership roles with adults--as well as basic attitudes toward the self, career, and social change in middle age.

The findings invite further research in these and related directions for they have important implications, both practical and theoretical.

First, if personality data can provide indicators of whether a prospective teacher is likely to seek supervisory or administrative roles after a short period of teaching, then training programs could be made more relevant to the long-range career needs as well as to the immediate goals of individual trainees. Thus, student teachers who show strong potential for supervisory or administrative roles could be trained from the outset toward the dual competencies required for effectiveness with children and adults alike, thereby circumventing the need for them to enroll for training in educational

leadership at a later time.[20] The present study, then, is potentially applicable to the development of methods and knowledge that could enable teacher training to become more responsive to the differential needs of prospective educational personnel.

Second, the development of knowledge about the relationships that exist between personality and career direction in childhood education is fundamental to a conceptualization of the dynamic forces that are at work in varied segments of the educational system. For instance, if we knew why some teachers choose to remain with children throughout their working lives while others choose to become the supervisors of those teachers, we could begin to identify some of the subtle yet powerful factors that influence the learning environments that both groups attempt to create. In the present research we have attempted to identify some of the motivational patterns that may influence the taking of these differing career directions; to indicate how these patterns in teachers and leaders could have growth-promoting or growth-inhibiting effects both on children and adults who work in the schools; and to raise questions concerning their implications for childhood education.

Finally, little is known about career choice and development in women, chiefly because in the past so few professions have been open to women. Although this research focuses on career differences <u>within</u> an occupational domain, it contains the potential for building hypotheses with consequences for fields that lie beyond that of education. The study lays the groundwork for understanding the personality dynamics in women that make them psychologically more suited to work with children on the one hand, and those that propel them toward leadership work with adults on the other. The findings, therefore, have implications for future research on women in a wide range of professional roles, both traditional and new.

Footnotes

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1. Some aspects of this work were described in a paper presented at the September 1976 meetings of the American Psychological Association: J. L. Rosen and D. Wallace, "Personality Antecedents of Career Direction in Middle-Aged Women Educators."

2. See J. L. Rosen and M. B. Palmer, "Learning to Lead," Childhood Education 50 (1974): 79-82.

3. J. L. Rosen, "Personality and First-Year Teachers' Relationships with Children," School Review 76 (1968): 294-311.

4. Our search for subjects was made primarily through the alumnae files of the teacher-training institution and through answers to an alumnae survey which the institution had made before this study began. We had hoped to identify two additional groups for purposes of comparison: (1) a group who had entered occupations outside the field of education, and (2) a group who had not worked outside the home after training to become teachers. We were unable, however, to locate sufficient numbers of comparable subjects in these latter categories to include them in the study.

5. While a focus on excessive feelings of shyness and social insecurity in general precluded placement in this category, an exception was made if the subject said she overcompensated for such feelings by acting assertively.

6. In many cases, subjects placed in this category used verbal structures suggesting that they were applying an implicit measuring rod to their progress toward some desired psychological end-state. They said, for instance, that they were more confident than they used to be, or less insecure, or

beginning to gain insight into themselves. Such comparative structures were seldom used by those placed in the predominantly confident, outer-oriented group.

7. The second investigator made the categorizations without knowledge of the career group--teacher or leader--from which the autobiographies were drawn.

8. We examined the groups on a closely related dimension termed "Reactions to Change and Adversity" in which the effort was made to compare their reactions to stressful events, in general, i.e., not only to major life crises as defined above, but to change, adversity, or challenge of other kinds as well. We have not treated this analysis in the main body of the report because the data on which it is based are drawn both from the childhood period and that of young adulthood, thus cutting across the two data areas on which the major analysis of autobiographical material was based. We did, however, want to see how the groups described their responses to stress per se, regardless of their more general personality orientations and regardless of life stage (i.e., childhood vs. young adulthood). Examination of the autobiographies along this dimension (taking the autobiography as a whole) revealed that the two examples cited above (p. 13) tend to characterize the differences between the leader and teacher groups in their general patterns of response to stress. Only four (13 percent) of the 30 leaders who provided data applicable to this dimension described themselves as failing to cope adequately with change or adversity, while 17 (50 percent) of the 34 teachers suggested that they reacted to such events with upset and fear and without adequate resolution.

9. Only a small minority of both groups stated a straightforward preference for writing over talking.

10. Because of revisions in the application form, this question was not asked of all members of the sample.

11. See footnote 3.

12. E. H. Erikson, "The Healthy Personality," Psychological Issues I (1959): 50-100.

13. The follow-up questionnaire was sent out to more alumnae than those who met the criteria of this study, and questions were asked for purposes of institutional self-evaluation that were not directly pertinent to the issues of this research. See J. L. Rosen and D. Wallace, "Career Development in Education: A Follow-up Study," Bank Street College of Education (1973).

14. See footnote 3; also J. L. Rosen: "The Remembered Childhood Self as Forecaster of Teacher-Child Relations," ERIC: Research in Education 9 (1974): 2; and "Perceptions of the Childhood Self and Teacher-Child Relations," Final Report to the National Institute of Education, Bank Street College of Education (1975). See also B. D. Wright and S. A. Tuska, "The Childhood Romance Theory of Teacher Development," School Review 75 (1967): 123-154.

15. In fact, any one-sided experience in (a recalled) childhood, whether this applies to a feeling tone, such as happy or sad, or to a behavioral pattern, such as aggressive or withdrawn, is likely to be associated in the adult with difficulty in developing empathy with children who display the opposing feelings and behaviors. See J. L. Rosen: "Personality Factors in the Reactions of Child-Care Workers to Emotionally Disturbed Children," Psychiatry 26 (1963): 257-265; "Matching Teachers With Children," School Review 80 (1972): 409-431; "Perceptions of the Childhood Self and Teacher-Child Relations," Final Report to the National Institute of Educa-

tion, Bank Street College of Education (1975).

16. The concept of the professional educator as a person who has remained a child and who is afraid to act in the realm of grown-up people in real life was stressed over three decades ago by A. S. Neill, the radical English educator; and he too has theorized that the educator relives his own past through the child. For a discussion of Neill's concept and several related theoretical positions, see E. Ilan, "The Problem of Motivation in the Educator's Vocational Choice," The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child (New York: International Universities Press, 1963), XVIII: 266-285.

17. For a fuller conceptualization of this issue, see C. Olden, "On Adult Empathy with Children," The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child (New York: International Universities Press (1953), VIII: 111-126.

18. M. Stodt, Autonomy and Complexity in Women Teachers in Leadership Positions. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University (1972).

19. See footnote 3.

20. An experimental program based on this concept has already been carried out at the Bank Street College of Education in its Graduate Programs Division. The program underscored the need for guidelines for the selection of candidates for "teacher-leader" training.